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The Explicitation Interview

Examples and Applications

Abstract: *This article summarily presents the explicitation interview with some examples of interviews. In the first part, referring to three excerpts from protocols, we consider some of the techniques used to guide a subject into an introspective posture. We show how these techniques create conditions conducive to access to pre-reflective knowledge, knowledge stemming from a moment of action experienced by the subject, of which the subject has no knowledge in the mode of reflective consciousness. Some of this knowledge is in fact surprising both for the interviewer and for the interviewee. The experience or the expertise of the subject interviewed is invariably increased as a result. In the second part, we provide a brief insight into the fields of application of the explicitation interview, with reference to three case studies, which are presented in a vivid and detailed way (in the fields of sport, health and training, and artistic creation). We conclude with a very brief panorama of the various known fields of application of the explicitation interview.*

Key words

Explicitation interview, pre-reflective, explicitation techniques, reflection, verbalization.

This paper sets out to answer two questions:

- How does the explicitation interview make it possible to guide a subject towards an introspective posture enabling access to pre-reflective knowledge?

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- What use can researchers and practitioners make of explicitation data?

Before answering these questions, let us consider briefly what an explicitation interview is. The explicitation interview is a form of guided retrospective introspection, writes Pierre Vermersch, also in this issue. As a result of the passive synthesis described by Husserl (Husserl, 1998), the subject constitutes for himself (or herself) continuously and involuntarily a passive memory, an autobiographical memory of which a large part is, for the subject concerned, pre-reflective, i.e. the subject is not aware that he (or she) has this information available, it is not reflectively conscious for the subject.¹ The explicitation interview makes it possible to support the subject, without induction, as he makes the transition from pre-reflective consciousness to reflective consciousness, about a specified lived experience in the past, and more specifically a lived experience of an action. To this end, the framework created by the interview provides the conditions for the possibility of the provoked awakening of recall. After concluding a communication contract with the subject and after expressing an intention of awakening recall,² the interviewer guides the subject towards the evocation of this specified lived experience and towards access to an intuitive donation³ of recall, so that he carries out the intuitive filling-in process⁴ and acquires reflective consciousness of this experience. We say that the subject carries out a reflection⁵ of the past lived experience.⁶ The final stage is that of putting into words or verbalization. The verbalizations gathered supply data to the researcher or practitioner about the action and the subjective experience of the subject interviewed. They also enable the subject to gather

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- [1] The existence of this pre-reflective knowledge is well known to ergonomists, who observe the gap between 'enacted knowledge' (i.e. what the subject has really done and can be observed by a third party) and 'professed knowledge' or 'declarative knowledge' (i.e. what the subject says he has done, which in most cases corresponds to institutional professional knowledge). The first example (When the gesture speaks...) is a perfect illustration of the existence of this gap.
 - [2] 'I suggest that you take the time to allow what comes back to you, as it comes back to you, about the moment when ...?' or 'What comes back to you first when you take the time to think about the moment when ...?'.
 - [3] This intuitive donation is triggered by sensorial elements or by elements of the context, elements of concrete memory. In this case, 'intuitive' means without words, unspoken.
 - [4] The interviewer guides the subject through his exploration of the field of attention in recall, to help him rediscover, in an unspoken mode, all the information whose recovery is desired.
 - [5] In this text, we say 'reflection' to mean the product of the reflecting act.
 - [6] All the subject's actions in this phase are referred to as a reflecting act.

information for himself about what he really did and experienced at the moment in question. It is important to note that for the interviewee to gain access to his pre-reflective knowledge, he is required to establish a special relationship with his past, and to place himself in a special discourse position, here termed the evocation position,⁷ drawing on concrete memory (Gusdorf, 1951). It is important to stress that for the interviewee it is a matter of being present in relation to his lived experience as a lived experience, and not of thinking about his lived experience, which is something quite different.⁸

The three examples in the first part have been chosen to show the very technical nature of the guidance during the interview, and to show that the interviewer's expertise is of essential importance.

The three examples in the second part provide a glimpse of the fields and ways in which the explicitation interview is used, and are based on interviews concerning: sport, health and training, and artistic creation.

1. How Does the Explicitation Interview Make It Possible to Guide a Subject into an Introspective Posture to Gain Access to Pre-Reflective Knowledge?

Based on three examples, we will provide some indications of how the explicitation interview functions, of the expertise contained in the prompts and in the guidance used, and of ways of gaining access to pre-reflective knowledge. We will present, in each case, the context, the exchange, and the results we can draw from them.

1.1. When the gesture speaks...

The context

During a training course aimed at improving professionals' control of industrial facilities in malfunction situations on a simulator, the following event takes place: during the exercise, the head of the auxiliary circuits of the facility receives an order to cool the facility down. In the facility's operating guide, it is indicated that cooling is obtained by opening up a steam discharge circuit. As temperature is linked to pressure, the pressure merely has to be reduced to reduce the temperature. Unfortunately the operator carries out an inappropriate action which

[7] Vermersch tends to use the expression 'position de parole incarnée' ('embodied discourse position') to accentuate the link with concrete memory.

[8] For theoretical questions linked to the affirmations in this paragraph, see the paper by Vermersch in the present issue.

causes the circuit pressure to increase until a circuit protection valve opens. This is what happened in the debriefing of the situation, so that the operator was brought to a consciousness of his error (Blanc, Desjardin, 1997).

The exchange

Instructor:

When you applied the operating guide, what did you start with?

Operator: *(after thinking for a moment)*

We were at section x and I was asked to cool it down.

Instructor:

And when you cool it down, what do you do?

Operator:

I use the vent to atmosphere circuit and I request a lower pressure. *(As he replies, he mimes the gesture which he carried out on his control panel. His gesture corresponds to a gesture requesting a higher pressure, i.e. it is the opposite of what he is saying, but he does not realize this.)*

Intervention of station head:

Look at the gesture you are making. It is contradictory with the objective of lowering pressure!

Results

This short interview, in which the instructor gives only two prompts, underlines the highly technical aspect of the explicitation interview: the two prompts are open, they do not offer an alternative choice, they request information about the operator's action. They do not induce anything, they simply place the operator back in front of his action in the situation that he has just experienced. They are precise. The first part of the first prompt 'When you applied the operating guide', refers the operator back to the specified moment when the error was committed. The second part, 'what did you start with?', focuses the subject on this moment which is identifiable by him, guiding him away from making any judgment or commentary and towards the description of his action. The second prompt, 'And when you cool it down, what do

you do?', takes on board what the operator has just said and requests specification by an action of the verb 'to cool down' in this context. The operator gives a verbal response and pronounces a piece of professional knowledge. At the same time he replies corporeally and repeats the gesture which he did in fact make on the simulator, a gesture which denotes knowledge in action; the gap between the two is obvious. The intervention of the station head refers the operator back to the comparison of the two items of information, verbal and non-verbal, which he has just given. The instructor's prompts have supported him in the evocation of the action carried out on the simulator to 'cool it down'. The reflection occurs when he sees his gesture, i.e. when the pre-reflective knowledge of his action on the simulator is brought to his reflective consciousness and contradicts what he has just said. As we say in everyday language, he becomes immediately conscious of what he did.

1.2. Claire and her keys

The context

The interview excerpt presented in this example is taken from a series of research interviews about the mathematical activity of students entering university.⁹ Claire has volunteered for these interviews. She wants to become a teacher. She is very interested in the way thinking functions in mathematics and in what she can discover about the way she herself functions. On the day in question, however, she resists the support from the researcher who tries, at Claire's request, to make her focus on a moment when she says she has understood in a flash the significance of a mathematical symbol.¹⁰ As she comes out of the evocation, she says she is unable to recall what she was thinking and doing at the moment in question. To overcome this belief, the researcher proposes to her a second interview about a subject from everyday life. Claire agrees. The researcher then concludes a new communication contract, the aim being to find out what Claire was thinking at a moment of her own choice, in order to show her that her belief is not valid (Maurel, 2009).

[9] In the context of the CESAME research group of the IREM (Institut de Recherche sur l'Enseignement des Mathématiques and the IUFM (Institut Universitaire de Formation des Maîtres) of Nice. The working documents concerned have not been published. CESAME is an abbreviation for 'Construction Expérientielle des Savoirs avec Autrui dans les Mathématiques Enseignées'.

[10] It was in fact the definition of the existential quantifier.

The exchange

Claire chooses to recall what she was thinking when she went home at midday. She left the university on foot, and she bought a loaf and a cake (a 'galette des rois').¹¹ She arrived in front of her door, she had 'My bag on one side, the loaf and the cake balanced (*she makes the gesture with the left hand*), I put my bag down because I had the keys in the left hand pocket, I took the keys (*she makes the gesture with her right hand, moving it in front of her body, and going to the left hand pocket of her coat*) and I opened'. She describes her bunch of keys and her entry into the apartment. She is in evocation, which is shown by the fact that, for example, she counts the keys in her bunch, 'One two three four', by going to find this pre-reflective, and thus unavailable, information in the past lived experience which she has made present for herself in the evocation position. The researcher points out to her that she has described in fine detail her arrival at and entry into the apartment, and that what she expects is a similar description of a moment when she is doing mathematics.

100. C Wait wait, you want me to describe my way of thinking, in the same way that I have just described what I did just now at midday

[...]

105. M I did not ask you what you were thinking when you had your keys and your cake, I did not ask you to do it but

106. C Well, but I would be quite unable to say, even though it was at midday

[Claire's belief is present and very strong in this reply. However, in around forty short and precise replies and in a few minutes of interview, Claire will recall what she thought would be impossible to recall].

[In the replies which follow the one in which Claire reasserts her belief (reply 106), the support from the researcher involves several specific techniques used in the explication interview (Vermersch, 1994)

- the interviewee's consent for recontacting a past lived experience,
- the choice of a specified situation,

[11] The interview took place in the afternoon of 6 January (Epiphany holiday).

- a verification that Claire is indeed in the evocation position by non-verbal indicators (her rhythm of speech is slow, she is searching information which is not already available, her eyes are not focused),
- the resumption of the gestures,
- the holding in place on the moment when Claire puts the keys into the lock,
- access through the sensorial (by feeling the weight of the cake balanced on her left hand, a kinaesthetic feeling which triggers the vision of the trace of lipstick on the key), until the moment of the reflection of what she was thinking when she put the key in the lock].

[References to these techniques, or commentaries, are indicated between square brackets. The ‘stage directions’¹² inserted during transcription are shown between curved brackets and in italics].

107. M You are going to go back to the moment when you arrive in front of your door, the loaf and the cake (*I repeat her gesture*)

[The initiation of the awakening intention is a little sudden here, but it is situated in the confidence and consent horizon of the interview which authorises it; it is accompanied by the resumption of Claire’s gestures.]

108. C Mm

109. M You take the keys (*I repeat her gesture*)

[The researcher helps Claire to rediscover the elements she has already given to create the conditions necessary for the reflecting act, hoping that one of them — or other new ones which will come later — will open up the path towards what Claire was thinking at the moment in question. She is creating the conditions needed for the reflecting act, and supports Claire in the intuitive filling-in.]

110. C Yeah yeah

111. M You take the key

112. C For the top of the door

[12] By analogy with the stage directions of a play (acting indications given by the author), we use this term to denote information about the non-verbal behavior of the interviewee or interviewer in our transcripts.

[Claire's eyes are unfocussed, she is in evocation, and is searching for the information before replying.]

113. M For the bolt at the top of the door

114. C Ah I took it with my mouth in fact

[Claire is astonished as she recalls pre-reflective knowledge.]

115. M Yes

116. C I know because that put lipstick on it

[Claire justifies, spontaneously, how she knows that she took the key with her mouth, she is so associated to her past experience that the non-verbal attunement with the researcher is sufficient to support her: the researcher adopts the same body position, talks with the same rhythm, resumes the gestures, and in short acts like a mirror image of Claire.]

117. M And before they were in the mouth, the keys were where

118. C I took my keys, I took them out (*gesture of the hand*) and to sort them out, to find the right key out of four, I did this (*she mimes with her hands and her mouth*) finally I got the right one out, and after I took it with my hand

119. M And at the exact moment when you put the key in the lock

120. C Well

121. M You were thinking of what, put yourself back in front of your door, you have the cake, you feel it, you feel the weight.

[The researcher reminds Claire of the purpose of the interview, and asks her to return to a moment slightly before when the key was put into the lock, she supports her and suggests that she should direct her attention towards the bodily feeling at the level of the left hand which is carrying the cake and the loaf laid on top, to recall this feeling and complete the recall.]

122. C Mm

123. M You can feel (*I repeat her gesture*)

124. C Yeah yeah

[Prompt 123 encourages Claire to take the time to relive this feeling, and supports her by repeating the gesture.]

125. M The key you took in your mouth

126. C Yes

127. M You take it back in your hand

128. C Yes

129. M You are going to put it into the lock

130. C Yes

[The researcher describes the gesture Claire carried out at 118, she induces nothing else except what Claire has already mimed or verbalized.]

131. M At that moment

132. C Well just at that moment I saw the lipstick and that's when I saw it

133. M Yes you have seen the lipstick, you feel the cake there, it feels heavy

[The researcher helps Claire to complete the sensorial information and to put it together.]

134. C No it is balanced rather

[The researcher helps Claire to complete the kinesthetic feeling.]

135. M It is balanced, you put the key in

136. C Yeah

137. M And you see the lipstick, where is it the lipstick

[The researcher helps Claire to complete the visual dimension in the intuitive filling-in.]

138. C Just on the teeth of the key (*she seeks the information before answering*)

139. M Yes

140. C And I say to myself (*laughter*), yes but it's really stupid

[This precise moment is the moment of reflection of what Claire was saying to herself as she opened the door, on that day, on 6 January, shortly after midday. Intuitive filling-in is sufficient to obtain the information sought. Claire has just recalled what she was thinking about. Claire blushed, as this thought was perhaps difficult to say in a recorded research interview. The researcher puts Claire at her ease, the content is not important, the aim has been achieved, it has been proved to Claire that she can recall what she thought in a past lived experience that she thought had been forgotten. What has been done once can be repeated. Claire now knows, in the pre-reflective consciousness mode, experientially, because she has just done it, that she can recall information of which she does not have reflective consciousness. The researcher will use this lived experience as the basis for resuming explication interviews about Claire's mathematical activity, which she sets out in a performative way at the end of the interview by renewing the contract in 151 to return to the objectives of the research.]

143. M And there you are, you have recalled what you were thinking when you put the key in the lock. That's all, you keep it for yourself, what interests me is that you have recalled it for yourself
144. C Yeah
145. M If I ask you brutally 'hey, you know, when you put the key in the lock at midday what were you thinking about', you'll tell me: 'I don't remember', that's only to be expected, everyone gives the same answer
146. C Yes
147. M If we put ourselves back there, rediscovering the body's feelings, which we saw, you saw the lipstick, you said to yourself something which made you laugh and which you keep to yourself, but you have recalled what you were thinking
148. C Yes yes
149. M At that precise moment
150. C Yes yes, yes but there, there was that little detail, that there was lipstick

151. M Yes and well I look for the lipstick in the analysis exercise¹³ and I couldn't find it.

Results

We have pointed out in this example some of the techniques of the explicitation interview. Claire's final reply (reply 150) confirms that the reflection was triggered by the vision of the lipstick on the key. This vision followed the physical sensation of the weight of the cake on her left hand.

In most of the interviews, after the awakening intention of the interviewer, the subject addresses her lived experience, and initially nothing comes.¹⁴ Remember that this belief is not valid, the recall is not immediate and its possibility is counter-intuitive. Furthermore, the recall cannot be the result of a deliberate act on the subject's part; it is necessary to create the conditions for emergence by expert support. And perhaps the recall will take place? This is what happens here. The recall takes place despite Claire's belief, expressed in 106: 'I would be quite unable to say'.

Note that this interview was not intended to gain access to the content of Claire's thoughts, but to work with her on a limiting belief which prevented her from accessing her past mathematical activity. The real purpose of the interview, in agreement with Claire, was to get over this limiting belief and enable the continuation of the explicitation interviews about her mathematical activity. For Claire, who was interested by its functioning in this field which she adored, and which she had chosen against the wishes of her family. For the researcher, who had a research program in progress.

1.3. Sybille's table

The context

The psychologist Guillaume, in his manual of psychology published in 1932 (Guillaume, 1948; 1932), suggests a simple task, the learning by heart of the following matrix of numbers:

[13] Analysis is a field of mathematics.

[14] It is therefore essential that the interviewer helps her to explore possible ways of access: 'Perhaps you hear something, perhaps, perhaps not...'. The same thing applies to seeing and feeling. The interviewer may draw on observation of sensorial predicates in the language of the subject, or on the subject's eye movements (techniques borrowed from NLP).

12	8	9
4	21	6
7	15	11

We have used this task a great deal in the research group led by Pierre Vermersch, to obtain protocols for explication interviews about the lived experience of actions. The interviewer asks the interviewee to learn by heart the table of numbers, and during the process, observes or films the interviewee. Immediately after the memorization of the table, the interviewer carries out an explication interview so that the interviewee can make explicit the details of how he learns the table, and particularly the end criterion (how did he know that he knew?) It is this part of the interview, the final part, which we will look at here. The interview is conducted by Catherine Le Hir and the interviewee is Sybille. Sybille has just described in detail how she memorized the numbers, some of which were easier to memorize than others (Le Hir, 1999).

The exchange

[Sybille said, at 517]

517 S: in fact I have the impression that the numbers are in front of my head and that as I repeat them, they enter. Those which have really entered go to the back, and those which have not really entered, they are on the sides or the edges

[At the end of the interview, Catherine's aim is to obtain the end criterion. She accompanies Sybille in this effort. She reformulates with Sybille's words what Sybille has told her earlier.]

548 C: those that enter immediately, they go immediately to the back

549 S: those I know well, whose place I know, they go immediately to the back

550 C: all right

551 S: those I know less well, they are on the side

552 C: all right, OK

553 S: that's right

554 C: so there are those that go to the back, and those that are on the sides, and that's when you know that those ones are less well installed

555 S: yes

556 C: mmm, that's when you start reciting more slowly

[Catherine here again uses a piece of information Sybille gave her earlier in the interview.]

557 S: yes, until those on the edges enter

558 C: yes

559 S: and afterwards, well, it goes a bit quicker

560 C: all right

561 S: afterwards I say to myself 'I know it', so it's OK, usually I say to myself 'I know it', I recite it one more time and afterwards

[By a succession of prompts using the words 'how do you know that...', repeating the very words of Sybille, Catherine now keeps Sybille on the precise moment where she knows that she knows, she does not let her go, she continues until the criterion has been elucidated, without inducing, without interpreting, merely by repeating the very words of Sybille.]

562 C: and *how do you know* then that it's OK when you recite them?

563 S: after I have said 'I know'

564 C: yes

565 S: because it comes of its own accord

566 C: because it comes of its own accord

567 S: yes

568 C: *how do you know that* it comes of its own accord

569 S: because it runs through like that

- 570 C: because its runs through like that, of its own accord like that?
- 571 S: yes
- 572 C: *how do you know that* it runs through of its own accord and that it's OK
- 573 S: because I don't think
- [Sybille says she does not think; we know that denegation masks what exists; when Sybille does not think, she is necessarily doing something else. Catherine takes on board what Sybille is saying, and searches for what Sybille is doing, by getting around her denial.]
- 574 C: because you do not think, and *when you do not think, what do you do?*
- 575 S: in fact, I know it's OK because I'm able to recite them on my own, I'm able to hear them in my head, and then if there are other noises, I'm able to hear other noises at the same time
- 576 C: all right, you can be both in your head and outside at once
- 577 S: that's it, at the same time
- 578 C: well, thank you for all these details, you know it's really interesting.

Results

In this protocol, we have no indications about the non-verbal dimension but we can imagine from the quality of the information gathered that there was postural agreement between Catherine and Sybille, and that Catherine repeated the gestures of Sybille, and copied the tone of her voice and her speech rhythm to provide her with support. We have noted in the course of the exchanges the repetition of Sybille's words by Catherine, the non-inductive character of the prompts, and the holding in place on the moment when Sybille knows that she knows to elucidate the end criterion: Sybille knows she has completed her memorization of the table of numbers when she knows it sufficiently well to be available for another activity, such as listening to other sounds, as she hears the numbers in her head.

2. What Use Can Researchers and Practitioners Make of the Explication Data?

To answer this second question, we will provide examples taken from practitioners or researchers, specifying the context, the information gathered in the exchange, and the results we can draw from it. The first two examples concern action situations, while the third draws on an explication interview to document an artistic creation. It is important to stress that the explication interview does not exclude all the other kinds of expertise of the people who use it. It is just one more tool to explore a new field of data, that of the world as it appears to the interviewee.

2.1. *The hurdle race of a top athlete*

The context

The example is that of a top woman athlete, who produced some of the best French performances in 2000. She thus has a very high level of expertise. She is running a 100 meter hurdle race shortly before the Sydney Olympic Games. The hurdle race is an extremely standardized exercise during which the athlete jumps ten hurdles of identical height with fixed intervals between them.¹⁵ The race in question is the first important competition of the season. The competition takes place in two races. The athlete chooses to be interviewed about the one race of the two which 'left a bigger impact on her than the other'.

The athlete agreed with great interest to an explication interview with Jean-Louis Gouju (Gouju, 2001), as what she felt about the race was extremely negative. And yet, she had just produced her best-ever performance, and her coach was positive about it. Watching the video film, there was no indication of any justification for the athlete's negative judgement about her race. Nor had the coach seen anything visible or observable about the race to justify taking this view. Uncovering pre-reflective knowledge by the mediation of the explication interview would inform us about what could not be observed by a third party. The athlete contacts her past lived experience¹⁶ with a specific relationship to the past, that is the evocation position. She carries out the reflecting act on her lived experience of the race at the moment she jumps the fifth hurdle and just afterwards.

[15] The course is 100 meters long, with 10 hurdles 0.838 meters high, separated by a fixed interval of 8.50 meters. The distance between the start and the first hurdle is 13 meters, and the distance between the last hurdle and the finishing line is 10.50 meters.

[16] The race only lasted 13.35 seconds.

Information gathered

The beginning of the interview explores the moment before the start, getting into the starting-blocks, the start of the course and the jumping of the first four hurdles. The athlete talks about jumping the fifth hurdle, and a 'black hole' after this hurdle. She provides a piece of information: 'it's the girl next to me'. The interviewer asks her if she agrees to reconsider this moment. He gathers the following items of information:¹⁷ 'Well, when I jumped the fifth one (*silence, leaning forward*), it was as though I was frozen, you know, I didn't react in fact. After that, I let the hurdle take over because I saw her, that is I did not see her, but felt her, the girl there, the girl (*gesture with the left hand*) because we're about at the same time, she maybe has a very small lead, but nothing at all, you know... and then, she shoots off (*rapid gesture with the edge of her hand, and her eyes wide open*). I feel like I'm standing still. And her, whoosh. Because I'm in my thing you know, even so. Then I see her, I see her front leg, I see her leg, her right leg, I see the leg and I see that she is off. And then I lose my temper, well, I don't lose my temper but (*laughter*) I don't feel good (*laughter*), I don't feel good at all, because then I get angry with myself in fact, I get angry with myself. Because I concentrated on her and not on what I was doing myself, as a result I was surprised and (*silence*) I didn't give up but I said 'oh shit, I'll keep going, but well, heck (*gesture of annoyance and giving up of the hand, which moves away upwards and backwards*), I'll finish the race, you know'. And I feel that I am not fighting. The rhythm, I can't even hear the rhythm any more, and I continue, you know, I finish my race'.

The athlete then says that she doesn't feel the sixth hurdle, 'she passes', 'No, I can't see anything, I can't hear anything, not even the spectators, I think they're shouting however, usually they always shout, I can't hear anything at all.'

When the interviewer asks her to describe her bodily sensations at the end of the race, she says: 'At the end of my race, (*silence*) I don't feel like I'm fighting, I don't feel like I'm fighting as I should do. I have the impression of being heavy in fact, as though I was letting things happen rather than anything else. At the end of my race, it's coming back, I feel it's coming back (*rotating hand gesture*), but at a certain moment, I have a black hole, in the middle, between the fifth and, I don't know, about the ninth, I don't know exactly, I don't really know but I feel I have a black hole'. The interviewer keeps her

[17] Only the informative passages of the interview have been kept, and placed one after the other, with all the rest of the discourse and the prompts being deleted.

focused on the bodily sensations of the moment in question, which makes it possible to gather the following information: ‘it’s as though I had lost concentration, and (*mouth noise of annoyance*) and afterwards I... (*rotating hand gesture*) I don’t know. I have the impression that I did not attack (*hand gesture*) that is the impulse, I can’t manage to (*gesture*) as I should and everything, and throw everything into it, you know (*gesture*), I have lost concentration, (*silence*) I’m hot, I’m hot, I’m hot, yeah, and I have the impression that my arms are doing (*gesture of the arms*), I’m hot. I have the impression that my arms are going off in all directions. When I attack the hurdle, I have the impression that (*gesture of opening the arms*) I can’t control it. I can’t control what I am doing. I let it go (*gesture of the hand*), there’s a moment when, like that, I don’t know why, I get back into it. I don’t know why it came, and then I make a sprint (*rapid gesture in parallel of the two hands held forwards*) but I don’t know, I rush (*laughter*) and (*silence*) as though I have the impression that I have wasted time and I have to make up for it in fact, even if it can’t be made up, you know, but on the flat, I tell myself, it’s my strength,¹⁸ I must make up for it, you know’.

Results

The key event of this race, from the athlete’s viewpoint, is the existence of the ‘black hole’ after the fifth hurdle. This ‘black hole’ — and the loss of concentration which results — is triggered first by a feeling, and then by a vision of the right leg of the girl in the next lane, by the sensation of the girl who heads off, who is going faster than the athlete interviewed. The ‘black hole’ begins with a feeling of the opponent and her speed. ‘It’s the girl next to me’. This triggers a feeling of total loss of speed. ‘It was as though I was frozen’. ‘She shoots off’, ‘I feel like I’m standing still’, ‘And her, whoosh’, ‘I see that she is off’. In this ‘black hole’, the athlete cannot rediscover the expected feelings, which are coached in the work of training.

It is an accompanied return to this moment which enables the obtaining of interesting verbalizations. Everything happens as though the ‘black hole’ characterized something which the interviewee does not know. From then on, the feelings of heaviness, of being hot, of arms not being held, are not considered as forming part of the race. The interviewee then says she had lost concentration. She is no longer present in the race. Everything suggests that this incident led to her losing contact with the world of action as she had constructed it. But there is an important item of information which is not in the interview,

[18] The athlete is also a very good sprinter over 100 meters.

and which could have been sought in a second interview if it could have taken place. We do not know what happened just before the 'I let it go' which marks the emergence from the 'black hole'. What does the athlete do just before? what does she say to herself? what does she feel? what is her inner condition? what does she perceive? what does she pay attention to? to sum up, what triggered the emergence from the 'black hole' and the transition to the 'I let it go' for the final sprint.

It is worth noting the pointing up of a difference in tone between the positive external judgment of the coach and the chronometer concerning the race described — it leads to a personal record and a performance of a very high national level — and the negative subjective lived experience of the athlete — a 'black hole' lasting for more than four hurdles, an impression of heaviness, a lack of fighting spirit, a lack of control, a sensation of being hot — which she stresses at the end of the interview: 'And (*silence*) afterwards, I was really not happy, I go off, I get changed, I take my time because I am angry well, my coach comes and says to me 'why are you in a bad mood?' I tell him I really didn't feel good and everything, 'but no, you did 13.35 seconds', I say 'really', and it's the first time in fact that I break a personal record and I don't express great joy, you know'.

The athlete had not been overtaken in a race by an opponent for two years! So she had not anticipated what happened and what she experienced in the race. She did not know how to (or was not able to) incorporate it into her lived experience during the race.

We consider this interview to be extremely characteristic of the type of data gathered by explicitation interviews, data which cannot be observed or accessed by other means. There is no perception of this data by the coach, the video shows nothing. The researcher can enter into a dialogue with the coach and offer him these data so that he can decide how to use them. We have here two complementary kinds of expertise: that of the researcher who gathers the data and that of the coach who will be able to incorporate them in his coaching.

2.2. *Jeannine's expertise*

The context

Jeannine is a trained nurse. For twenty years, she has been an instructor, and head of training for paramedics at the University Hospital Centre (CHU) of La Rochelle. Jeannine wanted to better understand how she went about making intravenous injections, which she always succeeded in doing, even in difficult situations. This knowledge would help her in her teaching, and in the instruction she provides.

Maurice Lamy carried out an interview with her. The purpose of the interview is clearly defined. Jeannine is not certain that she is teaching the gesture used to put an intravenous injection in place well. She wants, through the mediation of the explicitation interview, to find out what she knows how to do (knowledge in action) but does not know how to transmit it (declarative knowledge).

Information gathered

The interview protocol is very long, effective and richly informative. We will present the situations explored and some pre-reflective expert knowledge which is made explicit, without showing how it has been obtained (Lamy, 1998). We will limit ourselves to what Jeannine has discovered during the interview about preparation, quality of interpersonal relations, and the putting in place of the tourniquet.

The first specified situation described is that in which Jeannine takes a blood sample from her son. The boy is very tense, he fears the injection. Jeannine describes how she uses both her hands to manipulate the equipment with her right hand and maintain the arm, by gently massaging to establish a relationship and provide relaxation and instill a sense of calm.

The second situation, which emerges during the interview, is that of the moment in which an anesthetist taught her what she knows how to do very well, and, above all, how he taught it to her. She was a student at La Pitié Salpêtrière hospital, she was 19 at the time.

In the third situation, she is at the hospital, she shows a 'nurse in difficulty' (who is unsuccessful in all her attempts to set up intravenous injections) how to go about it.

Jeannine describes in great detail all her gestures in the first situation, she confirms them in the third situation, and she compares the pre-reflective knowledge they have just uncovered with what she says when instructing her students. She also compares what she does in training and how she does it, with what was passed on to her by the anesthetist and how he passed it on to her.

First situation: overcoming the patient's reticence and stress

This is the preparation of the injection with someone who is reticent, which was the case of her son on the day in question: 'I sat down next to him,¹⁹ I put both my hands closer, I take his hand. He was extremely tense, I spoke to him, but as I touch him, I feel that I have someone

[19] Only the informative passages of the interview have been kept, and placed one after the other, with all the rest of the discourse and the prompts being deleted.

who is under stress under my hands (*she takes an imaginary hand between her two hands*), I have something which is holding back, which is contracted, there is a little muscle which is hard and which is contracted. And this is what I massage. I was talking to him. Little by little, I felt that his arm was relaxing. In fact, to take a blood sample, the arm must be extended. When I put tourniquets on, in general, I always massage the arm, moving upwards, that is while feeling the veins, and I put the tourniquet on. In fact, it is rather caressing. I have two hands and I use them.'

Jeannine comes out of the evocation to make a comment: 'I hadn't realized that I use both my hands, but that is extremely important! Because one of them provides reassurance and the other carries out the action. Finally, that's the word I should have used with the students. In fact, when you move your hand upwards, the person does not only feel the tourniquet, the person who is tense also feels something else'.

Jeannine returns to the evocation position: 'I take it fully in my hand... I don't work with the tips of my fingers, but with the hand, moving upwards. I take the rear of the arm. I have my tourniquet in that hand (*she looks at her left hand*). I always keep my right hand under the arm of the person. I take the end of the tourniquet. I draw out only one end. I move it upwards. In fact, I have one hand which acts, and the other which hardly moves at all, and which holds, which only holds. And I pass, still with the same hand, I pass the tourniquet under the loop... (*she carries out the gesture*). And I tighten with my left hand. Like that (*she again repeats the whole of the gesture*). In fact, I take my tourniquet like that, I hold like that, I take this one, and hop, I pass it through like that. I still have my hands on the arm. And I don't tighten hard! I take care that there should be no wrinkles in the arm. I pay attention to the suppleness of the skin. Because I see again the anesthetist²⁰ telling me: 'Be careful with that, if you tighten it too hard, you damage the veins. If you're taking one blood sample, it doesn't matter, but if you do several, you damage them'. Afterwards I do not let go, when I remove my hands, I don't remove them like that (*she raises the two arms high in front of her*), that is I do not raise them into the air, I remove them by lowering them, (*she taps her hand on the table*), with my left hand, I tap a little bit on the arm (*laughter*), on the inside of the forearm.

[20] Jeaninne talks about the anesthetist for the first time in the interview.

Second situation: the anesthetist at La Pitié Salpêtrière hospital

‘In fact, looking at my hands, I can recall the hands of the anesthetist who showed me that. It was at La Pitié Salpêtrière hospital, I was 19 years old. Those were my first intravenous injections. And I remember I put the tourniquet on in front of him. I remember I pulled the tourniquet, at right angles to the arm, it was crazy! From such a height! Perhaps I’m exaggerating, I couldn’t say, but I have the impression as I see the tourniquet again as if I had pulled on some chewing gum! (*laughter*) It’s just crazy! It had frightened him to see me do that. He said to me: ‘You’re wrecking all the patient’s veins. Wait a minute!’ And as he realized I was embarrassed, he said to me: ‘Look...’ He took me by the arm, he stood me next to him (*as though to himself*): he stood me next to him. He says to me: ‘Stand there! And watch!’ So he showed me, and he said to me (*barely audible*): ‘A tourniquet, you put it on like a ribbon’. And I was amazed, subjugated to see his hands, gentle. When he had finished showing me, he had this gesture on my arm. (*She mimes the gesture on his arm*). He did it on my arm in the same way’.

Return to the first situation

Then ‘I took the tourniquet off very very gently... Super gently, it’s an extremely slow gesture, because if you take it off too quickly it can make the needle move. I put my hand back under his arm... I took the cotton wool which had remained in my hand. I applied gentle pressure, I asked him to press on it and not to bend his arm. This is extremely important. I asked him to apply pressure and not to bend his arm. Never bend the arm, because the vein has just been weakened, and if you weaken the vein, if you bend the arm, that makes it burst, and a bruise can form. Never. Never!’

And Jeannine comments on this pre-reflective knowledge which she has just brought into her reflective consciousness: ‘And that should be taught, that should... That, I’ve just realized that it is very important to teach. Because everyone can understand it. When you take the needle out, just apply pressure, the bruise will form with the blood cells and the fibro. If you bend, the hole will be made larger. When you unbend, the clot which is in the process of forming will be destroyed, and a bruise will form. The blood will go under the skin.

In fact, it’s crazy all the gestures I can make... When in fact it all goes incredibly quickly! And something extremely important I have just realized also, the bevel of the needle has to be facing upwards. Even if you are injecting on the side, it has to look at you, this bevel!

You need to have a space between the body and the syringe, or if it is a vacutainer, an assembled system, you need to have the space practically for a finger below. And I should have told them that...’.

Comparison of what Jeannine says and does when training

Jeannine has already recalled and identified knowhow which she puts into practice but which she does not teach. She goes further with this idea: ‘It takes me back to the time I was teaching, I was telling them it wasn’t difficult! (*laughter*). I went too quickly with the gestures, and I should have done it in a way enabling the other person to appropriate the gestures. Because it’s not easy putting a tourniquet in place, I’ve just realized. I went too quickly. And then also, I think also that I thought that because I could do it, the others would be bound to be able to do it.’

Third situation: the nurse in difficulty

She recalls another moment: she is at the hospital, she is showing what to do to a ‘nurse in difficulty’ who fails in all her attempts to set up an intravenous injection. Jeannine confirms everything she has just said by describing the setting up of an intravenous injection on a lady whose vein had been badly damaged by the unsuccessful attempts of her colleague: ‘So I caressed with the hand. I spoke to the lady. I took my time, I let the arm rest a little bit, I massaged the arm in a horizontal position, not at all with the hand low down, with the hand flat against the bed. When I say I took my time, I took a good ten minutes. I sat down next to her. I did nothing. I massaged her arm. And I spoke to her. I used a very small piece of cotton wool dipped in alcohol moving upwards, and never moving downward, that is from the bottom towards the top. I held it with my hand, I did not rub, never, never. I held her vein with my hand, I put my hand round her arm, I remember I was unable to put my hand completely around, as she had a fat arm. So I held her vein just as it should be done. I took a little bit of an angle, with the vein, I know that pushed it, and hop, I straightened it up, and I slipped into the little vein, the blood came out into the epicranian immediately, but immediately, I took off the tourniquet. I didn’t hurry up, I continued to touch the lady’s arm in the right way. Hop, I connected the drip feed.’

Results

At the end of the interview, Jeannine sums up the key points: ‘Never move from the top to the bottom. Do not tighten the tourniquet... too

much! Or tighten it, but not too much. Do not make the patient tighten his hand like crazy. Do not make the patient put his hand too low. Do things quickly. And make use of this little gesture which means that you hold on properly to your vein, you take it a little bit from the side. So as not to take it against the grain of the fibers. We call that a “moving vein”. If it’s a moving vein, it will move and you go through it. So instead of having one hole, you have two. And after when you pierce it again, that makes a third hole. And when you put the drip feed in place, it’s porous.’

She comes back to the transmission given to her by the anesthetist at La Salpêtrière hospital.

‘That’s someone who succeeded in passing on the right gestures to me, he did something to me which I should have done to others, that is, he said to me: “Look at what you are doing”. And the fact that I had realized from the outset that I was tightening the tourniquet too much, that I was going too fast, that I was not paying enough attention to the other person, well, that made me go over all the gestures again. On the other hand, what I can’t understand, is that I taught it in fact for 15 years, or even 19 years, this gesture, and I am not certain that I transmitted it completely.’

She draws conclusions of what the interview has done for her: ‘I think that the quality of the preparation, the putting in place of the tourniquet, that, I was not aware that I was carrying out so many gestures. And also the end of the blood sample, or the intravenous injection, is extremely important. You have to think of the other intravenous injection which will come afterwards.’

Jeannine concludes: ‘On the other hand, I would repeat what I said: it’s extremely simple and extremely difficult...’

2.3. Explication in the performing arts

The context

During the academic year 2007–2008, Frédéric Borde took part in the artistic project of the Sylvain Groud Company, a choreographic company based in Normandy (Borde, 2008). This was the result of a partnership between the company and the Rouen university hospital centre (CHU), under the auspices of a ministerial convention on ‘Culture in the hospital’. The partnership took the form of a one-year residence, during which the company provided performances, workshops and improvisations in departments which wished to receive it. This period of immersion led to the writing of a choreographic and theatrical show on this subject. During the period of residence, Frédéric

Borde was a permanent liaison officer between the company and the CHU. His function was to propose explicitation interviews to the nursing staff in order to document the play on the aid relationship. His active participation in the various workshops enabled him to make contact with the departments, and to meet enough volunteers for the interviews. In a few cases, it was possible to carry out several interviews with the same person, but in most cases, there was a single interview lasting about one hour. Frédéric proposed to his subjects that they describe ‘professional lived experiences in which the body holds an important place’. However, it was less a matter of documenting the lived experiences of the ‘physical’ body than that of the ‘flesh’, that is the subjective body, according to the phenomenological expression.

In this example, the format of the interviewer’s prompts guides the subject towards exploring and describing other layers of lived experience, rather than the lived experience of the action. We are entering a new field here: that of meaning. I chose this example because it seemed to me to perfectly illustrate the use of explicitation techniques and of the interview posture needed to provide information about the phenomenological lived experience of the body of the interviewee, and to take the troupe’s artistic creation project forward.

Information gathered

The following excerpt comes from the second interview with Franck, a voluntary visitor to people who are HIV-positive, who works with the association AIDES.²¹ Franck is talking about his first vision of Cyril, from a distance, at the moment when Cyril comes out of his room in a wheelchair, and he perceives him as ‘young and old’, with ‘debris of youth, blond hair, a quite lively look in his eyes and an old emaciated body’, ‘damaged, wounded, humiliated... a physique which is moving towards death... definitely...’.

[Frédéric keeps Franck on this moment when they first exchange looks, and supports him in the description of the bodily elements of his emotional lived experience. The dotted line indicates pauses in Franck’s words. We write A in place of Franck and B in place of Frédéric in the following exchanges].

60. A – I feel... I see in his face a great deal of violence... an enormous amount of violence... a revolt, an aggressiveness...
61. B – Mmm... and when you see this face of revolt and aggressiveness, what effect does that have on you?

[21] AIDES is the french name for the association helping HIV-positive people.

62. A – I am fascinated... that is I am... completely drawn... I feel I am drawn, there...
63. B – When you feel you are drawn, what does that mean for you?
64. A – Well, when I feel I am drawn, it is... the body extended towards... that is... how could I say it... as though it is an essential encounter... an encounter you cannot miss... something... as though I had come for *that*... not for him, but for *that*...
65. B – Mmm...
66. A – But not at all in... with the feeling, in fact... with the motivation of being a voyeur... That is... to make... it's very powerful, anyway I'll say it... to move towards a merging with *that*... *that* being everything he lets me see at that moment...

[Franck is in evocation, he is very closely associated to his past lived experience, he is in a quasi-reliving experience, what he is recalling is something inexpressible, unutterable. He is in the setting of the interview and of the communication contract that Frédéric has agreed with him; we should not forget either that he had asked for this interview. He is therefore consenting to verbalize, but this verbalization is difficult for him, he is looking for words to describe what he is contacting under the effect of reflecting act. We see clearly here, and in the rest of the interview, that words to describe may be difficult to find, that appropriate words, at least the words which are most appropriate at the moment in question, only arrive after several rejected attempts at verbalization].

67. B – All right... and when you are attracted by a merging, what is that for you... what do you do when you are attracted by a merging like that...
68. A – Well, my body... in my body, anyway... I feel it in my body, a great receptiveness...
69. B – Yes...
70. A – An ability to... to be in contact with the other person... with the skin of the other person, with... after, all that is more or less restrained, censored, but... at any rate, it is...

71. B – I suggest that you take care to stay with that moment... what is it for you at that moment, stretching out to him for a merging...
72. A – *(silence)* It's a little bit like lacking oxygen...
73. B – Lacking oxygen...
74. A – Yes... being out of your depth...
75. B – Mmm... when you are out of your depth, what happens for you?
76. A – Well... you're no longer in control...
77. B – At that moment, at the moment you go out of your depth, what is it for you at that moment...
78. A – What I feel?
79. B – Yes... how do you know you go out of your depth?
80. A – Because, because at that moment I am no longer reasoning... I am no longer in thought at all... and it's the body, the flesh, the skin, which... which vibrates...
81. B – Mmm... when the flesh vibrates, what happens?
82. A – It's something that tears, in fact... like a tearing, in fact, it's... something tearing, which opens up, which... which offers itself, which... like a great freedom of the body...

[Franck knows that, after this first exchange of looks, he has entered into a relationship with Cyril, he knows this because he has given him a pullover, 'a pullover which I liked a lot' and he recalls a moment when he saw Cyril wear the pullover. This commitment was judged to be dangerous by people 'who were voluntary as I was, and who said I was doing it all wrong, and that I was going to get my wings burnt'. Franck then describes a moment with two volunteers who are also friends, who remind him of the volunteers' basic training].

220. A – She tells me something is wrong, that I can't do that, that... that I'm going to hurt myself, that I'm going beyond the... the framework of my intervention, that I... am a volunteer, that...' Remember your training, support, empathy...', that you're like a helicopter, you don't guide, you take him by the hand but you are above and you... you want to stop him falling into the ravine and that's the role of the volunteer...

you are in empathy but you can't be in support, and that me, I hold out my hand, there... I take the hand instead of being above, of listening to him... of listening to the other person and... of being there more to hear than to guide, to advise, etcetera... and that I am getting it all wrong and that I can't do that... she also tells me that I may hurt the other person, by instituting a relationship like that... a close relationship...

[Franck hears but does not listen to the two volunteers who want to protect him].

230. A – I can't hear anything... I... I close up, without aggressiveness, but... I smile... convinced that my approach is right... nothing can stop me...

[It is then that Franck remembers that Cyril had become a symbol of his own revolt against AIDS. He realizes, in the aftermath of this recalled moment, that this moment corresponds to the period during which he believed he was HIV-positive, without daring to take the tests. When, after ten years, he decided to take the test which turned out to be negative, Franck continued his voluntary work, but this time following the recommended conditions, in a way he considers to be appropriate, and of which he is very proud].

Results

The interpretation of the data presented below is mainly the result of the work of Frédéric Borde. Here, as in the other examples, it is important to note that the interview of Franck provides us with information about his lived experience. The researcher receives what Franck has experienced, as he experienced it, from his viewpoint. Once gathered, these data, like the third-person data, form the object of the researcher's analysis and interpretation, no more and no less.

This interview is a perfect example of the inadequacy of the resources made available and the declared purposes of a person. Franck's motivation, which centers on his personal relationship to the pathology, leads him to subvert the deontological framework of his practice, and finally to put himself in danger and endanger the person visited. He acts with this person as he would with a person close to him, he forgets his status as a volunteer and the training he has received to fulfill this role. This example clearly shows the point at which the balance tips from 'therapeutic distance' to the horizon of

'burn out',²² this illness which affects those who work professionally in interpersonal relationships, which is frequently encountered amongst carers. Resources of a personal nature gain the upper hand over professional resources to the point of sweeping them away. This opens the door for all kinds of dangers for the two protagonists, as no rule now governs what they invest in the relationship.

This issue is a deep one because the carer has to call on his personal resources, and this everyday aspect of his work is not taken into account, supervised, supported. This is probably why this difficulty of being divided between the personal and professional fields is the topic which has emerged in the great majority of interviews. This is why Sylvain Groud and Frédéric Borde have chosen this issue as the main topic of their play, entitled 'If you would like to follow me...' ('Si vous voulez bien me suivre...').

Conclusion

We hope we have demonstrated in the first part how technique comes into play in an explication interview, and how it operates to enable access to the pre-reflective dimension of the subject's experience. Without this access possibility, a great deal of our experience escapes us. These examples demonstrate this. We should also point out the amazement and the pleasure of the interviewees who discover, in contact with their past experience, biographical elements which they have experienced, but only in the mode of pre-reflective consciousness.

In the second part we set out to show how researchers and practitioners/researchers with different backgrounds use the data obtained from explication in their work, and how they extend explication in order to achieve professional goals.

The article format is not conducive to covering the whole field of explication interview applications. Many researchers and practitioners have in fact taken advantage of this interview technique in a wide range of fields: education, training, analysis of practices and debriefing (Vermersch & Maurel, 1997), educational sciences and pedagogy, cognitive sciences, the control of industrial facilities, major companies, sports (athletics, rugby, football, refereeing, swimming), justice, health, bodily awareness and arts including performing arts.

[22] 'Burn-out' is the final and catastrophic stage of specific work-related stress. It mainly affects those whose professional activities call for a strong level of relational commitment in an aid relationship, such as social workers, the medical professions and teachers. It affects individuals who are committed and devoted to a cause.

A few examples are listed below:

- The thesis by Alain Mouchet (Mouchet, 2003) takes as its starting point the apparent contradiction between the discourse and the approaches of a number of top rugby coaches: they focus on the planning of the team's decisions and actions in several game phases; but at the same time they aim to create a maximum of uncertainty in their opponents, and deplore a lack of creativity and adaptation in their own players. Based on this observed situation, Alain Mouchet explores, for top rugby players, the connection to be found between the necessary degree of collective organisation and individual initiative in some game phases. This work is currently being reinvested in the teaching, training and coaching of an experimental team.
- The thesis by Armelle Balas (Balas, 1998) on metacognition, and more specifically on becoming aware of one's own way of learning, provides, through the analysis of explicitation interviews with adults, some indications which can help in answering the question: what does it mean to become aware of one's way of learning, and what role does this awareness play in learning?
- The thesis by Sylvie Coppé (Coppé, 1993) studies mathematical verification processes among pupils in a supervised assignment setting, with reference to the papers and roughs of the pupils, and explicitation interviews carried out with them.
- The thesis by Yves Champlain (Champlain, 2008) is a research/training work of a music teacher in primary education, which radically calls into question the legitimacy of his practices. This questioning forms part of a project to find what makes practical sense; it leads the author to delimit an epistemology which is specific to the analysis of practices, to explore the embodied and pre-reflective nature of action, and to question the very specific phenomenon of the articulation which can exist between a pedagogical gesture and an 'education feeling'. It opens the way towards a practical and continuous education system.
- A thesis is in progress in cognitive sciences, to apply explicitation techniques to issues of knowledge management. This is the work of Anne Remillieux, which is aimed at eliciting, and modeling knowledge for the management of change at

SNCF,²³ which is largely pre-reflective, in order to facilitate its sharing inside the company.

- Other major French companies have initiated research and training work carried out using the explication interview, but the results of this work belongs to the companies, and cannot therefore be made public.
- A research project has been carried out in response to a call for tender from the training department of the Judicial Protection for Young People unit (*Protection Judiciaire de la Jeunesse*) (Faingold, 2008 a, b). An initial phase of data gathering, carried out through explication interviews of experienced educators, has enabled a detailed analysis of their activity in educational aid in an open setting.²⁴ A second phase of work, involving a reflective analysis group working on practices which drew on data gathered through explication, has encouraged the uncovering of invariants and the formulation by professionals themselves of statements reflecting shared professional knowledge. The results of this research will be used to draw up a new training program for the educators of the Judicial Protection for Young People unit.

Articles on all this research can be found in the journal *Expliciter*, in published theses and memoirs, and in books. On the site www.expliciter.fr you will find an exhaustive list of the research, of which we are aware, in which the explication interview is used to gather data.

The journal *Expliciter* and the site of the same name are published by the Groupe de Recherche sur l'EXplicitation (GREX), under the scientific responsibility of Pierre Vermersch, a researcher at the CNRS.²⁵ The GREX is made up of practitioners, instructors and researchers involved in a very varied range of fields. The group leads training courses in explication aid techniques, it guarantees the certification of the leadership of the training courses, and it is the benchmark group for the analysis of explication practices. It is also the

[23] SNCF is the French national railway company (Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Français).

[24] Educational Aid in an Open Setting ('Aide Educative en Milieu Ouvert') is a judicial measure ordered by the children's court judge in the case of children who are in danger. The aim is for the social worker (specialist educator or social assistant) to eliminate danger by means of an educational action directly inside the family, or in a protected situation outside the family.

[25] French National Centre for Scientific Research (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique).

place for the development and dissemination of research on the practice of introspection (explicitation of explicitation). Pierre Vermersch leads five seminars a year in Paris, and a 3-day experiential summer school seminar once a year at Saint Eble, in Auvergne.²⁶

Finally, we should mention the research training and support work of Maurice Legault in Quebec, Canada (Legault, 2004, 2006). Mention should also be made of the dissemination and training work in Switzerland of the Swiss branch of GREX, Antenne Suisse, under the presidency of Mireille Snoeckx, with the participation of Vittoria Cesari. The translation into Italian by the latter of the book by Vermersch (2005) has opened the door in Italy for our work on explicitation and the practice of the explicitation interview.

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[26] Auvergne is a region of France.

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